

THE FAIRMOUNT BULLETIN

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No. 2

HYDE PARK'S WATER PROBLEM

Shall the Town Take the Water Company's Plant?

The Advisory Committee have recommended that an article be put in the warrant for the appropriation meeting asking that a committee of five be appointed to consider the advisability of taking the water works. It therefore becomes appropriate to discuss the question in The Bulletin.

The facts essential to a complete understanding of the question have been twice stated by a committee appointed by the town.

First, in 1888. At that time the committee made a very exhaustive examination as to the quality of the water, the question of finance, the cost of the plant, water supply, etc., and obtained from the company much information in answer to questions asked.

The committee near the close of their report say in part: "The subject is an important one, and involves large interests touching not only the present but the future welfare of the community as well. In this view of the case, it has been our aim to place before you the results of our investigation in such form as to put into the possession of every citizen such information as will enable him to form an intelligent opinion on the subject. We have endeavored to present facts in regard to the water works rather than to argue the question of their purchase, leaving it for the town, with the facts before it, to take such action as its best judgment may determine. We regret that our inability to submit a price leaves the town in the dark on one of the most important factors entering into the question."

And again in 1895, at which time the committee say: "We have examined the questions submitted to us with no feelings of hostility toward the company, but, on the contrary, with a spirit of friendliness toward it and its officers, and with a full appreciation of the important services they have rendered to the town. Any criticism that may be implied from our report upon the quality and quantity of the water is simply based upon the statement of facts given by

the state authorities who are charged by law with the superintendence of these matters. We have had a special examination made by an expert whose opinion coincides with that of the State Board of Health. It is merely a question of what is for the best interests of the town, both from a financial and sanitary standpoint, and your committee feel that the time has now come when it is for the best public interest that the town become the owner of the property, and in this opinion the committee are unanimous."

There are other interesting matters of more recent origin which bear upon the question. You will find that some of our citizens object to the taking of the water. Some think that the town would not conduct the work so economically as a private corporation. First, because it costs the town more for the same labor than it does a private individual or corporation. Second, because the officers in charge would receive larger pay than the officials of the water company.

Probably there is some merit in both of these objections; yet, the number of men employed is not large, most of the work of extending the mains would be let out by contract the same as it has been by the company, and the salaries are fixed by vote of the town.

Under the Metropolitan Water Act, passed in 1895, Hyde Park was placed in the Metropolitan district, and has to contribute toward the cost of the Metropolitan system, in spite of the fact that if our present water supply should fail we could not get a gallon of Metropolitan water at any price. That will continue to be the condition so long as our water system is owned by a corporation or by individuals.

If the town takes the water works we at once become entitled to rights and privileges under the Metropolitan Act. Considering the population and valuation, we have to pay one-sixth as much as we would naturally have to pay if we took the Metropolitan water. We paid in 1903, for the sole benefit of our neighbors, since we have no privileges ourselves, \$2,187.72, and in 1904 \$2,749.92. This shows that it is more liable to increase than to decrease.

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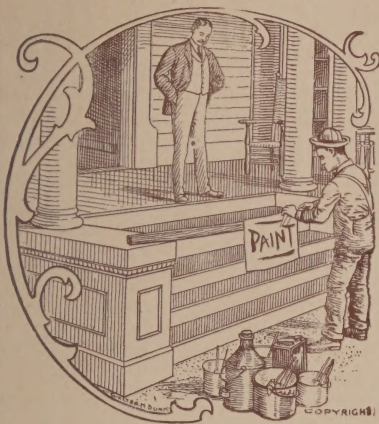
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